sive plains descend toward the Atlantic, famous since Darwin's voyage, are accounted for as sea cliffs, cut during the recovery from a period of depression after the valleys had been eroded. Volcanic cones and lava flows give some variety to the region. Salt lakes are barred in valleys behind the sand reefs of the former shore lines, and their salt is explained as having been retained since a part of the ocean was there enclosed. This conclusion, as well as the implication that salt lakes are usually supplied by salt springs, seems open to question; but as a whole the geographical descriptions are much more lucid than those that one usually meets in geographical magazines.

THE ST. CROIX DALLES, MINN.

A THESIS by C. P. Berkey, University of Minnesota, discusses the 'Geology of the St. Croix Dalles' (*Amer. Geol.*, XX., 1897, 345–383) and throws much light on the geography of the district, which seems to be one of special interest. Cambrian strata lying unconformably on pre-Cambrian igneous masses constitute the bed-rock of the region. Heavy glacial deposits, morainic and washed, overspread the bed-rock and determine much of the surface form. Large glacial rivers and the discharge of the glacial West Superior lake have carved important valleys, of which the rock-walled dalles attract most attention. Several abandoned river-courses contain lakes, some of which seem to belong in the rare species of pools excavated by the plunge of extinct falls.

SURFACE CURRENTS OF THE NORTH SEA.

OBSERVATIONS made for the Fishery Board of Scotland on the surface currents of the North Sea, chiefly by means of floating bottles, are discussed by T. W. Fulton (*Scot. Geogr. Mag.*, XIII., 1897, 636–645). A tolerably regular circulation around the margin of the sea is found at an average rate of two or three miles a day, southward on the west, northward on the east side of the sea. The velocity varies with the winds, and after a period of unusual and persistent southeasterly winds in December, 1896, and January, 1897, the current was reversed along the coast of Great Britain. The currents are, therefore, ascribed to the prevailing westerly winds, which drive the water towards the eastern side of the sea and tend to heap it up there. In the firths the currents are irregular, varying with winds and tides.

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CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

THE UNITY OF THE HUMAN SPECIES.

LITTLE is now written about 'monogenism'' or 'polygenism.' To the physical anthropologist that question is quite absorbed in the wider one of 'variation.' But the psychical unity of the species is still lacking definition. A noteworthy contribution to it is one by the Marquis de Nadaillac in the *Revue des Questions Scientifiques* for October last. He points out the unending similarities in implements, arts, funeral rites and religious symbols in tribes of like stages of culture in all times and places.

That these are proofs of psychic identity there can be no doubt. But it is not quite clear how the author interprets them. In some passages he speaks of such customs and inventions being 'handed down from unknown ancestors by generation to generation;' while elsewhere he says the solution lies 'in the identity of the mind of man in all periods and in all regions.' The latter is the position which is most acceptable to the trained ethnologist.

LOCAL ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS.

IN the rapid changes of American history the mode of life of one generation is scarcely known to that which follows it. Hence the value of collecting, while we can, those ob-

jects which represent how our near ancestors worked and played. No recent publication better illustrates how much of worth there is in such a collection than a descriptive catalogue of objects in the Museum of the Historical Society of Bucks County, Pa., prepared by Mr. Henry C. Mercer. It bears the felicitous title 'Tools of the Nation Maker,' and is handsomely printed and covered. The notes, folk-songs, etc., which the author adds render it much more than a catalogue, and the index is a model of completeness. Copies can be obtained through Mr. Mercer (Doylestown, Pa.).

RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF EUROPE.

ON previous occasions attention has been called in these notes to the excellent series of articles on the racial geography of Europe contributed by Professor W. Z. Ripley to the *Popular Science Monthly*. The eleventh instalment, that in the December number, dealt with the British Isles, and is of special interest to English-speaking peoples. In preparing it Professor Ripley was actively aided by members of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, and officially by that institution itself. His article, therefore, represents the most recent and thorough scientific study of the population of the British Isles.

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SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE UNITED STATES FISH COMMISSION.

As directed by the American Society of Naturalists, Professor Henry F. Osborn presented to President McKinley, on January 7th, the resolution passed by the Society at the Ithaca meeting, and published in the last issue of this JOURNAL. As it is desirable to give this resolution the widest possible circulation, it may be repeated:

"*Resolved*, That the American Society of Naturalists, as representatives of the principal scientific and educational interests of this country, unanimously express to the President and Congress of the United States their sentiment that the Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries should, according to the law of 1888, governing his appointment, be 'a person of proved scientific and practical acquaintance with the fish and fisheries of the coast.'

"*Resolved*, That it is of the utmost importance that the Fish Commission, as one of the most useful scientific institutions of the government, should be free from political influence and should be administered with the highest degree of scientific efficiency by an experienced officer."

The President received the resolution very courteously and replied that he recognized it as representing the sentiment of all the institutions of the country, and that the United States Fish Commission should coöperate with the colleges as originally planned by Spencer F. Baird. His decision in the matter of appointment will not be made public at present.

THE WASHINGTON ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.

ON September 15, 1897, the Council of the Geological Society of Washington invited the other societies represented in the Joint Commission of the Scientific Societies of Washington to appoint 'a committee of conference, to meet similar committees from other societies,' for the consideration of certain questions relating to the joint organization of the scientific societies. In response to this invitation, the following committees were appointed: From the Anthropological Society, Frank Baker, W J McGee, Lester F. Ward; from the Biological Society, L. O. Howard, C. Hart Merriam, George M. Sternberg; from the Chemical Society, C. E. Munroe, W. H. Seaman, Wirt Tassin; from the Entomological Society, W. H. Ashmead, Theodore Gill, C. L. Marlatt; from the National Geographic Society, Henry Gannett, G. K. Gilbert, Gardiner G. Hubbard; from the Geological Society, Whitman Cross, S. F. Emmons, Arnold Hague; and from the Philosophical Society, Marcus Baker, J. R. Eastman, Bernard R. Green. This Committee of Conference met on December 6 and organized by the election of J. R. Eastman as Chairman and Whitman Cross as Secretary; other meetings were held on December 9 and 11. After full discussion, the following resolutions, among others, were